

Latino/a Students' Funds of Knowledge: A Look at Home Literacy and the Opportunity for  
School Incorporation

Elizabeth S. Parry

Senior Honors Thesis

School of Education

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2016

Approved by:

---

Dr. Michael Dominguez – Thesis Advisor

---

Esmeralda Rodriguez – Thesis Second Reader

---

Dr. Sharon Palsha – Thesis Course Professor

---

Shuting Zheng – Thesis Course Reader

## Contents

Introduction.....	5
Latino/a Lived Experiences.....	7
How is Literacy Defined?.....	8
Context: Why Latino/a Students?.....	10
Demographics.....	12
Sociocultural-historical context.....	15
Literature Review.....	19
What are Funds of Knowledge? .....	19
Sociocultural-historical theory.....	22
Third Space.....	22
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.....	23
Fluid Pedagogy.....	24
The Deficit Approach.....	25
The Difference Approach.....	26
Resource Pedagogies Approach.....	26
Critical Race Theory.....	26
Cultural Styles Approach.....	29
Methodology.....	30
Results.....	31
Making Personal Connections Through Read-Alouds .....	32
Personal Narratives.....	34
Trauma Studies.....	36
Avoiding 'Othering' Impulses in the Classroom.....	38

Counter-Narratives and Critical Literacy.....	39
The Use of Testimonios.....	40
Critical Witnessing.....	41
Alternate Course Options.....	46
Creating Positive Multilingual Environments.....	47
The Fluidity of Culture.....	50
Teachers as Ethnographers.....	51
Discussion.....	52
Students as Holistic Individuals.....	52
Implications for Educators.....	54
Implications for Pre-Service Teachers.....	57
Limitations.....	58
Implications for Future Research.....	59
Conclusion.....	59
References.....	61
Appendix.....	65
Figure 1.....	65
Figure 2.....	66
Figure 3.....	67
Figure 4.....	68
Figure 5.....	69
Figure 6.....	70
Figure 7.....	71

**Abstract**

The literature review study addressed the importance for educators to be knowledgeable about students' home literacies. It will address the significance of educators taking on the role of an ethnographer within their classroom. It specifically addressed Latino/a students. The main research questions posed in this study are the following: 1) What is significant about Latino literacy practices? 2) What are pedagogical implications for engaging Latino funds of knowledge? 3) What is the importance, socio-politically and academically, of Latino students' cultural identities? The study provides key definitions of funds of knowledge and literacy, contextual information and historical information on Latino/s in the United States, with a demographic focus on North Carolina. Following this, key theory and practices in relation to funds of knowledge will be discussed. In the results, pedagogical practices related to the theories and practices from the literature review will be given. By using qualitative methods, such as learning about the family histories of their students and their families, educators will be able to implement pedagogical practices that fit toward the needs of the students within their specific classroom.

*Keywords:* Latino/a, Funds of Knowledge, Literacy, Culture

Latino/a Students Funds of Knowledge: A Look at Home Literacy and the Opportunity for  
School Incorporation

During my senior year of high school, I participated in a program called, The Augustine Literacy Project. In this program, which included myself and nine other seniors, participants went through a month-long literacy training that was designed to improve reading, writing and comprehension in below-grade level readers. The following months during that last year of high school were spent tutoring a second-grade student one-on-one. The student who I specifically worked with, Rosa<sup>1</sup>, was from Mexico and was also in the ESL program at her school. The first day that I tutored Rosa, she informed me that her least favorite subject was language arts. She did not like to read or write whatsoever and I knew that I had my work cut out for me. As the weeks went on, I could see Rosa's literacy development growing and her teacher was thrilled at the progress that Rosa was making in the classroom. Given these positive reports, I was confused when her teacher told me, a few months into the program, that Rosa was saying that she hated being in school and that while her academic work had improved towards the beginning of my working with her, it was steadily plateauing. Along with this, while Rosa had shown growth, she was still not quite on grade level in her reading and writing. Rosa's teacher was concerned that her dislike for school now would lead to a drop in the academic progress that Rosa had made. Rosa's teacher wanted to know if there was anything I could do to instill in Rosa a love of learning. I was overwhelmed by the teacher's request. I thought that the sessions had been going so well and I saw lots of improvement. That tutoring session I asked Rosa straightforward, "Do you not like being in school?" She told me that she did not. She did not find it interesting. In other words, Rosa could not connect the material to her own life. I realized then that I needed to

---

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym

get to know Rosa even more. Yes, we had developed a strong bond and I knew that she trusted me, but I needed to get a fuller picture of who she was. I asked Rosa to do a mini-project for me. I told her to try to craft a piece about what her family does during the summer. I figured that she might write a few sentences but at our next session she came with two pieces of notebook paper glued to a poster board that was filled with drawings of flowers, butterflies and stickers. The notebook pages were filled with writing-great writing. Rosa was glowing when she brought her project to me. That project was an enlightening moment. I realized by reading her words that she had a beautiful relationship with her mother, that she loved spending time in the garden and she had strong connections with her extended family. I also learned that her time spent in Mexico and her family there, was a factor of immense importance. In Moll's study (1992), *Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms*, he introduced the concept of students' 'funds of knowledge.' Moll states that, "Anglo children may spend a summer in France and we make a big deal about it, by asking them to speak to the class about their summer activities! Carlos spends summers in Magdalena, Mexico, yet he's probably rarely been asked to share his experiences with anyone," (Moll, 1992, p. 136). I thought of Rosa when reading this passage. She had her own connections to Mexico, like Carlos, but was not talking about or incorporating these experiences in the classroom. I started crafting writing prompts that asked questions about family activities and friendships; topics that I now knew interested Rosa, instead of prompts that did connect as well to her life. She became so immersed in the act of writing that she started to write poetry at home, bringing in her pieces to me. I realized that she loved poetry so I started to incorporate children's poetry books into our lessons. By the end of our time together, Rosa was almost two grade-levels above in literacy. At the end of the year, I received a note from Rosa's teacher telling me that she was thrilled with Rosa's

academic progress. More than this though, her teacher thanked me for truly caring about Rosa and developing a relationship with her that went beyond learning how to read and write. What was more meaningful for me than Rosa's academic improvement was her acquired love for Language Arts. Rosa informed me at one of our last sessions that she wanted to be a poet or songwriter when she grew up. This was from a little girl who did not like reading, writing or school at all.

The purpose of this study is to showcase the importance for educators to bring in Latino/a funds of knowledge into their classroom, and to acknowledge and validate the lived experiences of children.

### **Latino/a Lived Experiences**

This current study is based on the concept of Latino/a students' funds of knowledge and how the incorporation of Latino/a students' funds of knowledge will strengthen their literacy development in the classroom. The main research questions posed in this study are the following. 1) What is significant about Latino literacy practices? 2) What are pedagogical implications for engaging Latino funds of knowledge? 3) What is the importance, socio-politically and academically, of Latino students' cultural identities?

It is important to note that I myself identify as a middle-class, white female. Given the topic and research questions of this thesis, this raises some tensions which are important to note. In Behar's, *Dare We Say 'I'*, she writes, "To assert that one is a 'white middle-class woman'...require[s] a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the word and, more particularly, the topic being studied," (Behar, 1994). Given this, it is important to me that I recognize that I experience and have experienced life differently than the students that I am writing about have. Dutro (2009) also

reminds us that, “how I define myself and understand my life cannot be separated from the language used to construct what it means to be a professor in a particular community, a middle-class white woman in the US, a mother, a daughter, a wife, or a sister,” (Dutro, 2009, p. 90). It is important for my readers to note that I have not seen the world through the eyes of someone who identifies as Latina. Yet, educators’ lived experiences may not reflect those of their students, they can still hear and learn from those students who do have differing experiences. Educators must first, and continually, reflect upon their own identities in order to realize that these may not match up with their students.

### **How is Literacy Defined?**

For the purposes of this study, literacy is defined as an expansive term. In Gutiérrez’s (2009) work, the concept of literacy is defined as being “embedded in all social practices,” (p. 213). In her work, static and homogenous views focused around literacy are rejected. Scribner and Cole used the concept of a “functional learning system” (Gutiérrez, 2009) to describe literacy, meaning that literacy is used in different contexts and for different purposes. When I refer to literacy, I am addressing Latino/a children’s home and school literacy practices, which might include, but are certainly not limited to, a strong sense of familialism, including close-knit ties to extended family, having lived experiences outside of the United States, and being able to speak both Spanish and English.

Street (2003) writes on the difference between the autonomous approach to literature, which imposes western literacy as the norm that other forms of literacy are judged against, and the ideological model of literacy, which is a culturally sensitive view of literacy practices. The ideological model notes that literacy varies between cultures. It also views literacy as a social practice. Street notes that, “the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves



rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being,” (Street, 2003, p. 76). Street also notes how literacy is involved in all social practices, and depends on a particular setting, such as a job market or educational setting.

Luke (1995) discusses literacy as not about a set of skills but about a construction of identity and social relationships. Luke states that, “there are no universal ‘skills’ of reading. Reading is a social practice, comprised of interpretive rules and events constructed and learned in institutions like schools and churches, families and work places,” (Luke, 1995, p. 97). Literacy then, varies from individual to individual. Luke states that, “reading has been used in literate cultures as a way of forming or shaping up particular kinds of moral and social identities,” (Luke, 1995, p. 101). Therefore, there is not a “right” way read but reading various from group to group. Luke goes on to state that a literacy participant has a relationship with the literature that they are using. The way that a person responds to a specific text, for example, will vary based on an individual’s view, beliefs, prior knowledge, culture etc. (Luke, 1995). The group that has acquired the sociopolitical power of the time imposes their meaning into literature. The interpretations of the group in power are the interpretations that are given validity. For this reason, the literacy that is validated within the school is the literacy of the group that holds power in society. In this case, the white perspective would be what holds power and thus, literature is interpreted through a white lens. By viewing literacy as a construction of identity, Luke points out that interpreting meaning from a text does not have one right answer but meaning will vary depending on a person’s own funds of knowledge.

Similarly, Dutro (2009b) discusses the connection between language and identity and states that, “identities are constructed from and through language,” (Dutro, 2009b, p. 90). Therefore, literacy is intertwined with a person’s sense of self. This is connected to Discourse

which Dutro (2013) defines discourse as “ways of speaking and ways of making meaning,” (Dutro, 2013, p. 10). Dutro also makes the important note about how one’s own self is positioned in discourse and states that, “within discourses, particular subject positions-or ways of defining oneself in any given situation are made available. At the same time, we are read by others through these same discourses in ways that may or may not be consistent with how we view ourselves,” (Dutro, 2013, p. 10). Dutro means that the cultural, social, political positions, their funds of knowledge, are an integral part of discourse. This relates back to Luke’s (1995) position on how literacy is a construction of identity. In discourse, just as in constructing meaning through literacy, those who are not in the powerful sociopolitical group at the time will not receive a sense of validation in their identity, since the group in power is the one that sets the standard. Yet, as Luke (1995) points out, literacy is dependent on each individual contextual situation.

**Context: Why Latino/a Students?**

The US Census estimates that by 2050, Latinos will make up one-fourth of the US population (NC Latino Health, 2003). Gandara (2010) states that Latinos are the largest minority group in the US, and are the fastest growing segment of the school-age population in the US. Yet, she also points out that this group is the most educationally underserved, which is seen by looking at the dropout rates for this demographic (Gandara, 2010). Lucas (1990) addresses the needs of the Latino demographic and states, “high drop-out rates, low standardized test scores, poor attendance records, and the small number of students going on to post-secondary education all attest to the failure of most high-schools to meet the needs of this student population,” (Lucas, 1990, p. 317). Gandara states that “Latino students’ extraordinarily high dropout rate is related, in part, to their lack of attachment to school and a sense of not belonging,” (Gandara, 2010, p.

28-29). Over the past 25 years, the dropout rate for Whites and Blacks has declined, with Whites going from 12% to 7% and Blacks going from 21% to 13%. Yet, “since 1972, we have seen no such statistical significant trend among Hispanics,” (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 589). As discussed in the section on the definition of literacy, the literacy of Latino/a students is one that is not given power and thus, the lives of these students are not seen within the classroom, which leads to a de-valuing of the lives of Latino/a students.

In Palos and McGinnis' documentary, *Precious Knowledge* (2011), it addresses the creation of an Ethnic Studies program in an Arizona high school, in an attempt to boost graduation rates among Hispanic students. One student in the high school stated his feelings on education and said, “Sometimes I feel like education is so against me. Like they don't want me here. Like they just want me to drop out,” (*Precious Knowledge*, 2011). An advocate for the ethnic studies program spoke on how the Latino/a students in the Arizona school view the education system and stated, “I've never met a kid that had a dysfunctional relationship with learning. I have met kids with dysfunctional relationships with school,” (*Precious Knowledge*, 2011). Acosta (2007) writes about this Tucson High School, where he taught the Chicano literature class. Acosta writes, “the reality for many Chicano/a or Latino/a youth in our country is that school has rarely worked for them and they feel that it is not for them to succeed,” (Acosta, 2007, p. 37). One student in the Ethnic Studies program stated, “The way things were going, I would have dropped out of school. This space saved me,” (*Precious Knowledge*, 2011). Another stated that, “for someone who felt so out of place, it feels good to have a home,” (*Precious Knowledge*, 2011). With the implementation of the program, the school began to see a rise in student improvement. A staff member stated, “Our kids are now graduating and going to college at a much higher rate,” (*Precious Knowledge*, 2011). Once the students were able to see

themselves in their classrooms, school became a more meaningful learning experience. It became an experience where students could relate to the material that they were being taught. Therefore, they could finally see the importance of education, which led to a desire to finish their high school careers.

Iddings (2013) discusses how Latino/a students are being stripped of their own social, cultural and linguistic resources in the classroom. She addresses the rise in immigration and states, “the rapid demographic shift occurring in the United States, mostly due to immigration, has produced a fundamentally new and diverse social context of education...children previously considered ‘minority’ students are now the numerical majority in all major city schools in the country,” (Iddings, 2013, p. 496). The United States is becoming more and more diverse, yet, the school curriculum shows a strong disconnect with this. The curriculum is still fit to a white majority. Yet, as Iddings points out, the Latino/a population is now the majority in many major cities throughout the United States.

### **Demographics**

Gandara notes that the Latino population in the public school system doubled between 1987 and 2007, increasing from 11 to 21 percent for US Students (National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, 2009). Along with this, the US Census bureau predicts that by 2021, one of four US students will be Latino. In key states, such as Texas and California, in the US Southwest, the Latino school-age population is already approaching one-half (Gandara, 2010). Not only is the population growing, but the majority of the Latino population is youth. According to Patten, about half of Latinos born in the US are under the age of 18, and are the youngest major racial or ethnic group in the United States<sup>2</sup>. Patten notes that according the Pew Research Center analysis

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Figure 1

of U.S. Census Bureau data from 2014, about 14.6 million, or a quarter, of Hispanics are between the ages of 18 and 33. She goes on to state that six-in-ten Hispanics are defined as Millennials or younger.<sup>3</sup> Roughly three-quarters of Hispanics, born in the US specifically, are Millennials or younger<sup>4</sup> (Patten, 2016). The median age of Latinos in the US is 25.8 (NC Latino Health, 2003).

In North Carolina specifically, the Latino population is growing rapidly. In fact, in 2003, North Carolina had the fastest growing Latino population in the country<sup>5</sup> (NC Latino Health, 2003). The Latino population grew from 76,726 in the year 1990 to 530,328 in 2003. In 1990, Latinos made up 1.04% of the population and in the year 2003, Latinos made up 4.7% of the population (NC Latino Health, 2003). Most Latinos in North Carolina are of Mexican origin, with 65.1%. Puerto Ricans make up 8.2% of the Latino population and Cubans make up 1.9%. The rest, 24.8%, are from Central or South American countries (NC Latino Health, 2003). In comparison, the percentage of Latinos with Mexican heritage in the US as a whole is 58.5%. Puerto Rican is 9.6% and Cuba is 3.5%, over a quarter, 28.4%, is from other countries (NC Latino Health, 2003). Another important characteristic is that about two-thirds of the Latino population in North Carolina is foreign-born, with 64.2%. Along with this, over half of NC's foreign-born Latinos are non-citizens (58.3%) and 5.9% have been naturalized (NC Latino Health, 2003). Looking at the US as a whole, 45.1% are foreign born, 13.6% have been naturalized and 31.5% are non-citizens (NC Latino Health, 2003). Latinos are concentrated mostly in the Eastern, metro and military areas of North Carolina (NC Latino Health, 2003).

---

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, Figure 2

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, Figure 3

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix, Figure 4

In terms of age in North Carolina specifically, North Carolina Latinos are younger than the general population. The median age for people living in NC is 35.3 years but the Latino median age is 24. 12.1% of Latinos are under the age of five, and the general population in NC under the age of five is 6.7%. 20.9% of Latinos in NC are under age ten and 13.7% are under age 10 in the general population. In NC, Latino births increased from 1,752 in 1990 to 12,544 in 2000 (NC Latino Health, 2003).

Earlier on, males were most likely to come to NC for work. Yet, this has changed in that now, entire families are immigrating to NC. Yet, the NC Latino population still has a higher male percentage, 59.8%, versus 49% female.

North Carolina Latinos ages 16 and over are 74.8% likely to be in the labor force.<sup>6</sup> 69.1% of Latino adults in NC are employed. The North Carolina Institute of Medicine writes, “[Latinos] are far less likely to be employed in management or professional occupations, and more likely to be employed in farming, construction, production, or transportation occupations,”<sup>7</sup> (NC Latino Health, 2003). Over one third are in production, transportation, and material-moving companies and roughly one fourth are in construction, extraction and maintenance jobs. Around one tenth of Latinos are employed in farming, fishing, or forestry, according to the 2000 Census, (NC Latino Health 2003). It is important to note that, North Carolina is the fifth most farmworker state in the US; there are 100,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in NC and 60,000 are Latino (NC Latino Health, 2003). The North Carolina Institute of Medicine writes, “the work of Latinos helps drive the state’s economy,” (NC Latino Health, 2003). While Latinos are likely to be employed, they are also likely to live below the federal poverty guidelines,<sup>8</sup> which is set at

---

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, Figure 5

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix, Figure 6

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix, Figure 7

\$18,100 a year for a family of four in 2002. Latinos compromise 4.7% of NC's population, but they compromise 10.4% of the poor living in NC. Over a quarter, 27.4%, of Latinos in NC live in poverty (NC Latino Health 2003). The median income for Latino families in 1999 was \$30,529, as compared to the median income of non-Latino whites which was \$51,364 (NC Latino Health, 2003). Roughly one in ten families, or 10.5%, had incomes that were less than \$10,000 per year, as compared to whites at 3.6%. About 30% of NC Latino families had incomes below \$20,000 per year, as compared to whites at 11.5% (NC Latino Health, 2003).

In North Carolina, there is much diversity within the Latino community. Some groups might share common Spanish language and culture, but other groups might share cultural practices that are unique to their specific countries of origin (NC Latino Health, 2003). While there are differences among the groups, key traits have been found to be shared among Latinos, these include, "a connection with the Spanish language, strong family relationships and strong family orientation," (NC Latino Health, 2003). There are differences between the groups based on their reasons for migration to the United States. For Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, this has often been due to economics, with Mexicans having a longer history of migration to the United States. Cubans began migrating after the Castro Revolution. This included some upper class, educated Cubans who were seeking political asylum (NC Latino Health, 2003). Central and South America often migrate because of civil and economic unrest, and have the shortest history of migration (NC Latino Health, 2003).

### **Sociocultural-Historical Context**

It is also important to note the definition of Chicano, which is a term used to "describe one's political identity, or it can be used as definition of one's socioethnic identity," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 577). The term is an open one. It can refer to specifically the Chicano

Generation during the Chicano movement of the 1960s or it can refer to people born in the United States of Mexican origin (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 578). The Chicano movement began in the late 1960s when Mexican-American youth were inspired by the farm workers' strike in California and the African American freedom struggle (Castañeda, 2006). They used the term 'Chicano' to show their cultural heritage and the term, which used to have a negative connotation, became a politically charged, unifying term (Castañeda, 2006).

As stated previously, while the Latino population is increasing, the graduation rate is staying stagnant. Duncan-Andrade (2005) discusses the history of Chicanos in the United States. What is important to note is the sociopolitical context of Chicanos in the United States (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). This has its origins in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, which has continued to have effects on Chicanos in terms of "social and economic marginalization," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 577). The defeat of Mexico City by American troops, which led to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, has continued to leave an impact on the relationship between the United States and Mexico. A key piece to the treaty was the omission of Article X (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). Article X dealt with the rights of Mexicans living in the territory that was purchased by the Americans. Article X took away the property rights of Mexicans living on that land. This led to, "Mexicans [beginning] a journey of marginalization and second-class citizenry in U.S. society that persists today," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 581).

An example of the marginalization and sociopolitical alienation takes place is found in Santa Paula, California. Duncan-Andrade writes about this example and states,

...for a period of some 70 years, predominantly White families controlled not only the wealth of the town but subsequently also the political and social life. Through this control



of the political process, they perpetrated a system of oppression that 'subtly forbade Mexican Americans from participating in elections (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 584)

Chicano youth are also marginalized through the use of popular media. Duncan-Andrade writes on the use of media as placing Chicano youth as 'other' in society when he writes, "The popular media's images of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Latinos, Hispanics, and Chicanos offered up for the American public tend to stream together to form one image," (p. 585). These images tend to be of illegal Mexican immigration and Highway patrol officers chasing and beating illegals and criminal activity. Duncan-Andrade states that, "Chicano students may or may not understand the complete historical relationship between Mexico and the United States...but what becomes clear when they attend schools is that they must change or fail," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 588). Along these lines, Hispanic students tend to only receive one story about their cultural history. Duncan-Andrade discusses this issue and writes, "Traditional American history is the story of Mexicans as a conquered people, virtually devoid of historical, economic, or cultural significance. These notions of powerlessness and cultural deficiency have been passed down to Chicanos," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 582). Duncan-Andrade also discusses the effects that this has on Chicano students and states, "The positioning of the dominant historical view as the only acceptable knowledge in schools has meant the alienation and disempowerment of school-aged Chicanos...As the process of institutional disenfranchisement continues to happen, Chicano students' faith in the school system wanes," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 582). The curriculum is at the core of this and Duncan-Andrade writes that,

Chicano students are also faced with a curriculum that too often reduces their role in the historical development of the modern world to that of a conquered people whose contributions are hardly worth mentioning. To exacerbate this problem, the legacy of

oppressive relationships between Chicanos and American institutions is frequently minimized or bypassed altogether (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 593)

Students are also not given a chance to critique or analyze many historical narratives. For example, Woodrow Wilson's invasion of Mexico in 1914 is often described as "heroic and bold" (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 595). Yet, students are often not taught to critique this or look at the invasion in any other way besides being 'heroic and bold.' Duncan-Andrade discusses the effects of this on students when he states, "This deprivation of this opportunity to...see oneself as a creator of knowledge, stymies students' intellectual and social growth," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 596). Chicano students are also told conflicting messages in schools in relation to their own lives in the present. Duncan-Andrade states that,

On one hand, there is the institutional narrative articulated in a teacher's promise: 'you can become anything you want, even president, if you just work hard enough.' On the other hand, students are given a curriculum narrative that portrays Mexicans and Mexican Americans as a group whose historical contributions to the United States do not extend much beyond the sale of half of Mexico to the United States (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 593).

Chicanos do not receive references to other Chicanos making contributions in academia.

Duncan-Andrade writes that, "Instead, Chicano students are left to their own devices to make sense of readily available images of Chicanos serving food in the school cafeteria every day, and Chicanos cleaning the garbage cans and sweeping the floors at the end of each school day," (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 594). While Latino/a students get the impression from educators that you can, "be anything you want to be," this message again is fitted more towards the group that is in power at the time, in this case, the white group.

### **Literature Review**

This section of the study will address the definition of funds of knowledge and home literacies. This literature review will then address key theories and practices associated with cultural difference and a funds of knowledge approach to education.

#### **What are Funds of Knowledge?**

According to Molls' study, which was the seminal piece addressing the concept of funds of knowledge, he defines the term as, "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being," (Moll, 1992, p. 133). In terms of teaching, Moll writes that a funds of knowledge approach is, "a positive view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great, potential utility for classroom instruction," (Moll, 1992, p. 134). Funds of knowledge draws upon the skills, practices, community processes and literacies found in children's homes. Furthermore, funds of knowledge include the values and goals that are present within households (Moll, 1992). Moll's essay discussed a project that studied "the household and classroom practices within working-class, Mexican communities in Tucson, Arizona," (Moll, 1992, p. 132). Through observations, interview, life histories and case studies, the research showed an "array of cultural and intellectual resources available to students and teachers within these households," (Moll, 1992, p. 132). This requires the teacher to take on the role of researcher when it comes to learning about their students. Moll goes on to write that this approach is especially important for cultures that are generally considered "poor," (Moll, 1992, p. 32). Moll defines the term poor not just in terms of economics. Moll defines uses the term "poor" to show how the school system views the experiences of Latino/a children. Moll's (1992) claim is that by capitalizing on the household and other community resources, teachers can implement classroom instruction that

draws upon the knowledge and skills of the students. Teachers will therefore, teach to their students' own interests and inquiries. Moll's study focused on working-class, Mexican communities in Tucson, Arizona. Ten teachers participated in a series of training workshops on qualitative methods of study, including ethnographic observations, open-ended interviews, the writing of field notes, life history notes, data management and analysis. When these practices are combined analytically, they can give a portrayal of the complexities surrounding family functions in their socio-historical contexts. From the field notes taken during the interviews with the families, it was then up to the teachers on how they would use the knowledge that they had gained about their students in their own classrooms. Teachers worked cooperatively to develop ideas and activities for each of their respective classrooms. Each teacher, with two exceptions, selected three households from children in their classrooms to study. In total, the teachers visited 25 households and concluded approximately 100 observations and interviews during the semester of study. In the study, the Lopez family was addressed in depth. An in-home interview was used with the Lopez family, which allowed for assumptions about minority families to be challenged. Through the interview, it was found that Carlos' parents, "have a strong philosophy of childrearing that is supportive of education, including learning English. They have goals of a university education for their children, instill strong values of respect for others, and possess a tremendous amount of pride and a strong sense of identity," (Moll, 1992, p. 137). Moll goes on to write of the parents' pride in their children's accomplishments when he states, "Mrs. López's eyes lit up when she showed us the trophy her son had won in the science fair," (Moll, 1992, p. 137). Through the study, it was found that these values were not unique to the Lopez family, but similar values were found among all the households visited in the study (Moll, 1992). Moll writes that, "The teacher...is the ultimate bridge between the students' world, their and their

family's funds of knowledge, and the classroom experience,” (p. 137). Moll also notes the disconnect between the space of the classroom and the students’ household. Moll writes, “In contrast to the households and their social networks, the classroom seems encapsulated, if not isolated, from the social worlds and resources of the community,” (p. 134). Moll elaborates on this and writes, “Within [home] contexts, much of the teaching and learning is motivated by the children's interests and questions; in contrast to classrooms, knowledge is obtained by the children, not imposed by the adults,” (p. 134). Throughout the study, Moll notes the importance for educators to learn how culture is expressed in students’ lives and how they live in their own worlds outside of the school setting.

Dworin (2006) addresses a project entitled, The Family Stories Project, where children write stories that they have heard from family members in both English and Spanish. Dworin defines funds of knowledge as the resources that students can use within the school setting from their homes and communities. Dworin states that these are important tools for students’ academic work. Dworin’s idea for the family stories project “focused on the children’s languages and families as key cultural resources,” (Dworin, 2006, p. 512). Dworin (2006) writes that, “this funds of knowledge orientation draws on knowledge and experiences of the students and lets them become aware that their lives outside of school have meaning and importance within the classroom,” (Dworin, 2006, p. 518). In the project, the students wrote about a range of family stories. Dworin writes that, “The stories included a range of different topics, including immigrating to the United States to find work, a joke Christmas present, celebrating Easter in Guatemala, and various stories about the childhoods of parents and grandparents, to mention just a few,” (Dworin, 2006, p. 513). This shows how the definition for funds of knowledge is not a clear-cut one, because every child and every person has a different set of knowledge that they

have received from their homes and communities. Therefore, teachers will need to take on the role of a researcher, since funds of knowledge will vary between each student.

### **Sociocultural-Historical Theory**

Rogoff (2003) addresses the importance of Vygotsky's sociocultural-historical theory, which states that, "individuals are not separate from the kinds of activities in which they engage and the kinds of institutions of which they are a part," (p. 8). Vygotsky focused on how literacy and other skills rely on a person's individual culture. Sociocultural theory discusses how individuals and cultural processes are not separate from one another (Rogoff, 2003). In relation to school, Rogoff highlights the importance of teachers being knowledgeable about the social influences that their students come into school with (Rogoff, 2003).

### **Third Space**

Gutiérrez (2008) addresses the concept of the "Third Space," which builds on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Gutiérrez defines third space as a place "where teacher and student scripts-the formal and informal, the official and unofficial spaces of the learning environment-intersect, creating the potential for authentic interaction and a shift in the social organization of learning and what counts as knowledge," (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152). By seeing the classroom as a space for multiple social interactions, Gutiérrez says that there is then an added importance to "account for the interacting activity system of people's everyday lives," (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152). The third space focuses on the potential and the development of new knowledge. In regards to Latino students, this means that teachers ought to encourage students to use their own histories as learning resources. Gutiérrez writes this about how the third-space connects to Latino students' own realities, "[The third space]...does not focus on students'...academic deficiencies but on sociohistorical influences on their language, literacy and learning practices,

as well as on their social, economic, and educational realities,” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 43).

Gutiérrez also notes that the Third Space is more than just noting the importance of students' own literacies. The Third Space builds on the importance of students' own literacies by using those literacies to further students' educational development and acquiring of new knowledge. This means that teachers ought to utilize both the informal and the formal spaces of schooling to learn about their students' home literacies. Gutiérrez notes the importance of both the official learning environment on the unofficial one. Those informal and unofficial moments that occur in the classroom are the ones that will allow teachers to create pedagogy that fits to the lived experiences of Latino/a students. The Third Space uses students' own lives in order to develop a further understanding of new concepts and ideas in the classroom (Gutiérrez, 2008).

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Ladson-Billings (1995) addresses the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings identifies three terms that have been used on studies that address the home and school pedagogy disconnect. These terms are culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, and culturally compatible. The term culturally responsive is used to refer to dynamic relationship between the home and community culture and the school culture. The goal of culturally responsive teaching is to bridge the gap between home and school. Ladson-Billings writes, “teachers who used language interaction patterns that approximated the students' home cultural patterns were more successful in improving student academic performance,” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 466).

Ladson-Billings also addresses the importance of teachers observing students in their home and community environment. This practice allows for educators to organize the instruction that went into their classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Paris (2014) addresses the question of what exactly teachers are sustaining through asset pedagogies. Paris addresses how a culturally relevant pedagogy tends to be static, but teachers need to recognize that culture is not static. Instead, Paris suggest, our pedagogies must be sustaining, not just responsive: “while it is crucial that we work to sustain... Latina/o....[culture] in our pedagogies, we must be open to sustaining them in both the traditional and evolving ways they are lived and used by young people. Our pedagogies must address the well-understood fact that what it means to be...Latina/o...is continuing to shift in the ways culture always has,” (Paris, 2014, p. 91). Paris goes on to write how many of the frameworks for asset pedagogies, such as funds of knowledge, third space and culturally relevant pedagogy “have too often been enacted by teachers and researchers in static ways that focus solely on the important ways racial and ethnic difference was enacted in the past,” (Paris, 2014, p. 91-92).

### **Fluid Pedagogy**

Paris (2014) writes on the importance of fluid pedagogy for Latino/a students and states that, “we must be open to sustaining [culture] in both the traditional and evolving ways they are lived and used by young people,” (p. 91). Therefore, what it means to be Latino/a is continually shifting. Paris writes that the way in which funds of knowledge, pedagogical third space and culturally relevant pedagogy, are employed is often in static ways and while it reflects the historical context, it does not validate the fluidity that occurs in cultures for our youth. Paris notes that, “[culturally sustaining pedagogy] must resist static, unidirectional notions of culture and race that reinforce traditional versions of difference and inequality without attending to shifting and evolving ones,” (p. 95). Paris notes that for our young people, it is especially important to realize that culture is a fluid process.



**The Deficit Approach**

Paris (2012) addresses the progression of various ways of looking at language, literacy and culture of minority communities, in regards to academics. Paris begins with the deficit approach, which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s. This approach, “viewed the languages, literacies and cultural ways of being of many students and communities of color as deficiencies to be overcome in learning the demanded and legitimized dominant language, literacy and cultural ways of schooling,” (Paris, 2012, p. 93). In this case, the ‘legitimate’ and ‘demanded’ language, literacy and culture reflected that of the white, middle-class. Paris states that because schooling reflected this group, “languages and literacies that fell outside those norms [were positioned as] less-than and unworthy of a place in U.S. schools and society,” (Paris, 2012, p. 93). Paris writes how the confirmation of the white, middle-class literacy placed it as being superior to the literacy of minority communities. He states, “...the goal of the deficit approach was to eradicate the linguistic, literate and cultural practices many students of color brought from their homes and communities,” (Paris, 2012, p. 93). Essentially, Paris notes, the literacy practices of these communities were therefore, being replaced by those of the dominant group.

**The Difference Approach**

Following the deficit approach, Paris goes on to write about the difference approach, that emerged in the 1970s and the 1980s, toward viewing the practices of minority communities as equal to those of the dominant community but different (Paris, 2012). Yet, this approach did address the desire for the minority culture to assimilate into the majority culture. Paris states, “Still the goal here was to bridge toward the dominant with little attention to maintaining the heritage and community practices of students and families,” (Paris, 2012, p. 94).

**Resource Pedagogies Approach**

Finally, Paris addresses the resource pedagogies approach, which also emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. This approach, Paris writes, “repositioned the linguistic, cultural and literate practices...[of] communities of color-as resources to honor, explore, and extend in accessing,” (Paris, 2012, p. 94). Paris (2014) states how the purpose of these pedagogies when he writes, “[these] pedagogies...are not filtered through a lens of contempt and pity but, rather, are centered on contending in complex ways with the rich and innovative linguistic, literate, and cultural practices of...communities of color,” (p. 86). Paris also states how pedagogies should not concern themselves with the “White gaze,” (Paris, 2014, p. 86). Paris defines this term as how the goal of teaching should not be to get students of color to adopt to the White, middle-class norms, (Paris, 2014). Instead, Paris writes that the goal should be, “to explore, honor, extend...their heritage and community practices,” (Paris, 2014, 86). Paris writes that schools have defined terms such as ‘access’ and ‘equity’ as being centered around how to non-White students to speak and write like middle-class White students (Paris, 2014). Paris writes that, “notwithstanding the continuing need to equip all young people with skills in Dominant American English (DAE) and other dominant norms of interaction still demanded in schools, we believe equity and access can best be achieved by centering pedagogies on the heritage and contemporary practices of students and communities of color,” (Paris, 2014, p. 87). By valuing the practices of Latina/o in a way that does not push towards DAE and the culture of the White middle-class, teachers can reach towards achieving a more equitable pedagogy (Paris, 2014).

**Critical Race Theory**

Yosso (2005) uses the term critical race theory as a way to shift the view of Communities of Color away from the deficit perspective. Yosso aims to shift the focus in a way that showcases

minority groups' cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities. It commits to drawing on knowledge that minority students bring with them into the classroom from their own homes and communities. Yosso challenges Pierre Bourdieu's view that if one is not born into an upper or middle class family, they can access their knowledge, which would be the sole way for upward mobility in a society. Yosso argues that Bourdieu's argument gives an explanation for, "why the academic and social outcomes of People of Color are significantly lower than the outcomes of Whites. The assumption follows that People of Color 'lack' the social and cultural capital required for social mobility," (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). This view transmits into the school room and schools often work with Bourdieu's assumption that disadvantaged students lack the skills; academically, socially and culturally, that are required for success in society (Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu's view is that, "cultural capital refers to an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities possessed and inherited by privileged groups in society," (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). Bourdieu's view also states that cultural capital, social capital, and economic capital can be acquired through one's family, if they are in a middle or upper class group, or through school. This places people into the binary of other culturally wealthy or culturally poor and places White, middle to upper class culture as the standard that all other cultures are judged against (Yosso, 2005). Yosso challenged Bourdieu's view and states that, "culture is neither fixed nor static... [and that] the cultures of Students of Color can nurture and empower them," (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). He also challenges by using CRT to show that Communities of Color possess cultural wealth. He gives an example of a working class Chicano/a student who could bring in a different vocabulary to school, such as knowing the two languages of English and Spanish. The child might also be able to bring in his knowledge of running errands by using the city bus, or translating mail, phone calls or coupons for his family (Yosso, 2005). While this knowledge is valuable to the

Chicana/o student's family, it is often not considered valuable within the school context. CRT is beneficial because it shifts the focus from the White, middle class as the only culture that has value to showcasing the cultural capital that Communities of Color possess (Yosso, 2005). It is important to note that Critical Race Theory has expanded over the years to include the experiences of Latino/a communities and has moved away from its early view of looking at the Black/White binary (Yosso, 2005).

Yosso notes an important piece of CRT is the knowledge that People of Color bring with them from their own communities. CRT legitimizes this knowledge and writes that it is critical to understanding the experiences of minority groups. Yosso writes that, "CRT draws explicating on the lived experiences of People of Color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonios, chronicles and narratives," (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). Along these same lines, another important piece of CRT is the move from a deficit perspective when looking at People of Color. This view sees these communities as being deprived of something. In the school community, this perspective views minority students as being without the normative cultural knowledge and skills and it also assumes that parents do not value their child's education (Yosso, 2005). For this reason, the school system often aims to give students the dominant forms of cultural knowledge (Yosso, 2005). Yosso argues these views that permeate the school system, "reproduce educational inequities for students from nondominant sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds," (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). Yosso notes that there are six forms of capital that Students of Color bring with them into the school system. These are These are aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. It is important for teachers to note these forms of capital because these can be utilized in the classroom.

### **Cultural Styles Approach**

Gutiérrez and Rogoff also address a move from the deficit perspective through what they term as the cultural styles approach, which discusses different groups with respectful terms that attempt to not make judgments on their cultural practices. The alternative to this is deficit thinking and the denial of cultural difference. By not discussing cultural variation, Gutiérrez and Rogoff note that the majority cultural practices become the norm, (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003). Gutiérrez and Rogoff also address the trait approach, which they define as, [the assumption] that there is a built-in relationship between learning style and minority group membership,” (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 20). This is the view that what is “known” about a group can be applied to all individuals that make up that group, (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003). Gutiérrez and Rogoff state that the result of this view is, “that groups will be treated as homogenous, with fixed characteristics carried by the collection of individuals that comprise the group,” (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 20). In teaching, this approach does not account for the individual experiences and practices that students bring with them into the classroom. Gutiérrez and Rogoff suggest a cultural-historical approach, which they state as, “help[ing] researchers and practitioners characterize the commonalities of experience of people who share cultural background, without ‘locating’ the commonalities within individuals,” (p. 21). Gutiérrez and Rogoff suggest focusing on the varying ways in which people participate in community activities. This would result in the move away from overgeneralization. Gutiérrez and Rogoff give the example of making generalizations based on characteristics such as a Spanish surname or the country of birth. The authors state that this will lead to a non-holistic understanding of not just the community practices but the individual as well (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003). The authors go on to write that, “cultural-historical theory leads us to expect regularities in the ways cultural communities

organize their lives as well as variations in the ways individual members of groups participate and conceptualize the means and ends of their communities' activities," (p. 22). This approach views individual development and disposition as not separated from the cultural and historical context. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) write, "we attend to individuals' linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires as well as to their contributions to practices that connect with other activities in which they commonly engage," (p. 22). Individuals' background experiences contribute to how they engage in literacy activities.

In the sections that follow, the theories will provide relevance to ways in which funds of knowledge could be incorporated into the classroom. Pedagogical practices will be addressed; which educators can use in order to achieve a culturally relevant pedagogy within their classrooms.

### **Methodology**

An expert in the field of Latino/a studies and education, provided the titles of articles and books for the majority of the literature reviewed. The following articles were provided from this expert in the field, Acosta (2007), Carmagian (2013), Castañeda (2006), Dutro (2009a), Dutro (2009b), Dutro (2013), Lucas (1990), Luke (1995), Rogoff (2003), Moll (1992), Paris (2012), Paris (2010), Paris (2014), Gutiérrez (2008), Gutiérrez (2009), Gutiérrez (2003), Gandara (2010), Duncan-Andrade (2005), Iddings (2012), Behar (1994), and Dworin (2006). McGinnis' documentary (2011), was also recommended by the expert. Ladson-Billings' (1995) article was found in Paris' (2012) article references. Levine (2008) was found through the UNC Library. For the purposes of using the UNC Library, an E-research by discipline was utilized with 'education' as the field and using the *Eric* text. The key terms searched were the following: culture and funds of knowledge. The sub-terms searched were, Hispanic and Latino/a. The websites giving

statistics on Latino/a demographics were searched via the Web with the terms, 'Latino demographics in the United States,' and 'Latinos in North Carolina.' *North Carolina Latinos* (2003), was found from searching 'Latinos in North Carolina.' Patten (2016) and *Latino Immigration* (2003) were found from searching 'Latino demographics in the United States'. In the discussion section, three works of poetry are utilized; Malaguzzi (n.d.) Lyon (1999) and Hughes (1995). Malaguzzi and Hughes' works were found from experts in the field of education at UNC-Chapel Hill. Lyon's work was found from the official website of Lyon.

The study was organized first using articles that helped to explain and define 'literacy' in the document. Following this, articles that discussed the history of Latinos in the US, gave demographic information and helped to prove the importance of prioritizing Latino/a education were addressed. In the literature review, articles that provided definitions about theory and practices in regards to and relation to funds of knowledge were used. Finally, in the results section, articles that gave specific pedagogical practices for culturally responsive education were the focus.

This research is focused on predominantly elementary aged students, with some high school examples. Along with this, the focus is on Latino/a students, yet, many of these pedagogical practices could be applied to other demographics as well.

## **Results**

The pedagogical approaches that are addressed in the following section will focus on work that is being done with culturally marginalized communities. The focus for this research is on Latino/a communities. There are many communities to choose from and it is important to note that the practices for each community will look different. These practices will allow for Latino/a

students to be able to see their lives within the classroom, just as Rosa was able to grow her love for learning through pedagogy that was personal to her life.

### **Making Personal Connections through Read-Alouds**

Dutro gave an example of a biracial African American-Puerto Rican boy, Julius, who was able to come up with many “hard times” examples to relate to the story, *Leah’s Pony*. Julius described not having enough money to pay the house bills or money for gas. He also discussed the death of his baby brother and sometimes not having enough food in the house. Dutro states that this students “responded to Leah’s experiences in highly personal and sophisticated ways as they brought their lived knowledge of hard times to bear on their responses,” (Dutro, 2009b, p. 95).

In Dutro’s observations, she found that the curriculum given for the text, *Leah’s Pony*, especially the teacher edition, placed boundaries on the responses that teachers could expect to receive from students. In this case, the language of the possible responses determined what the “normal” responses would be (Dutro, 2009b). With Sharon’s diverse third-grade class, there ended up being a variety of personal responses to students’ experiences with hard times. Dutro writes that, “the absence of the kinds of connections made by Sharon’s children from the anticipated responses reveals one way in which the curriculum privileges some kinds of knowledge over others,” (Dutro, 2009b, p. 96). These limited possible responses in the teacher edition also do not encourage students’ personal experiences to be brought into their reading of the text. Dutro notes that when students bring in their own real-world experiences, it leads to them having a deeper connection with the text. Dutro notes that it is should be a goal for teachers to stop seeing students as numbers and percentages. Instead, Dutro states that teachers should find ways to allow students to use their own personal experiences when engaging with school



literacies, and this will lead to a richer relationship with the texts that the students are using (Dutro, 2009b). By bringing in students' own experiences, and not just using the limited suggested responses from the teacher edition for Leah's Pony, this will benefit the classroom as a whole. Students will get to hear a wide range of experiences and realize that there are many ways in which people live in the world.

Read-alouds are a beneficial tool for elementary classrooms specifically. Read-alouds, such as with Friedrich's, *Leah's Pony*, or Polacco's, *The Lemonade Club*, can be conducted as dialogic read-alouds, where educators insert text-to-self questions for students. These types of questions can get the students to ponder and discuss whether they ever been in a situation like one of the characters, or if they have ever felt the way a character has. A writing prompt can follow a dialogic read-aloud, such as asking the students to write their own "Lemonade Stories," (Dutro, 2013). The practices of producing narrative writing and read-alouds are also ones that could be fit to the standards, which will be addressed later on when discussing the implications of this research for educators. It is important to note the importance of educators allowing students the freedom to *choose* when writing about their own lives. As stated in the trauma studies section, narrative writing can incorporate both positive aspects of life and the harder aspects of life as well. By allowing children to write about life's challenging moments, educators give validity to all life experiences that a child has. Along with this, through the practice of personal narratives, the educator reveals to his or her class that life does not stop once the students enter into the classroom. Students constantly carry with them what is happening in their lives. A goal is to make the classroom not only a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing their lives with their teachers, but also a space where students' can see that their experiences are being used as resources in their academic work.

**Personal Narratives**

Paris (2010) studied the practice of looking at texts that multiethnic youth write within the contexts of their everyday lives. This helped to expand the notions of writing and the pedagogy for teaching writing. Along with this, the practice helped to further how to define a multicultural classroom, or as Paris defines it, “living together in difference,” (Paris, 2010, p. 279). Paris addresses Pacific Islander, African Americans, and Latino/a at South Vista High in California. In relation to what ‘texts’ students created, they wrote on their backpacks, clothing and skin. They also sent texts from phones and online. Paris defines these as, ‘identity texts,’ which he defines as, “youth-space texts inscribing ethnic, linguistic, local, and transnational affiliations on clothing, binders, backpacks, public spaces, rap lyrics, and electronic media,” (Paris, 2005, p. 279). Youth created, “worn texts,” which was texts written on objects like backpacks and clothing, “delivered texts,” which were the texts via electronics and “flowed texts,” which were original raps written and performed by the students, (Paris, 2005, p. 279). Paris (2014) states that pedagogies need to be fluid and speak to the realities of youth in the classroom today. Paris points out deCerteau’s (1984) “scriptural economy,” and writes that, “deCerteau theorizes that the power of ‘writing’ has been subsumed by institutions and capitalist class structures to create and sustain the haves and have-nots,” (Paris, 2010, 279-280). By allowing multiethnic students to write their own texts, Paris notes that it gives power to a group that is often deemed as being powerless, (Paris, 2010). Students’ home literacy practices should be valued in the classroom, instead of used in ways that move them toward the dominant group (Paris, 2014). Paris writes, “...as a result of continuing demographic change toward a majority multilingual society of color, fostering linguistic and cultural flexibility has an instrumental purpose for both students of color and White students: multilingualism and multiculturalism are

increasingly linked to access and power in the U.S. and global contexts,” (p. 87). Instead of assimilative approaches, Latino/a students will be able to bring their own literacies into the classroom, through the practice of writing.

Dutro (2009b) also addresses the power in allowing students to write personal texts. She studied students in a third-grade classroom at Davis Elementary. This school is surrounded by racially integrated neighborhoods, which included Whites, Puerto Ricans and African Americans. Along with this, 100 percent of the children in the third-grade class qualified for the free lunch program. The students had been reading a story, *Leah's Pony*, by Elizabeth Friedrich, which is a story about a young girl during the Great Depression (Dutro, 2009b). The lesson required students to reflect on their own definition of what it means to go through “hard times.” Dutro writes that the exercise forced students to make connections from their own lives to *Leah's Pony* that could only be made through students' first-hand knowledge of economic struggle (Dutro, 2009b). Dutro also notes that this lesson gave those students who have experienced poverty an advantage. Dutro writes that, “they have a privileged understanding of the inequities of the world,” (Dutro, 2009b, p. 89). This is important for Latino/a students because their literacies are not often the ones that are given privilege within the classroom.

Language, as Dutro (2009b) writes, plays a part in the construction, maintenance and resistance to inequities (Dutro, 2009b). Language gives children that might normally be silenced by society the power to resist these efforts to keep them silent. Dutro also writes that in the educational system “...the life experiences and language of children living in poverty are often viewed as inappropriate for school and, thus, are rendered invisible or deviant,” (Dutro, 2009b, p. 91). Such is the case with students' experiences that do not often fall into the majority. Dutro

notes that all life experiences are valid. This validation will allow Latino/a students to bring all of their lived experiences into their academic work.

### **Trauma Studies**

Narrative writing is a process where students can write about all of these lived experiences. It includes not only positive events in children's lives, but also the harder events as well. Dutro (2013) addresses the pedagogical practice of trauma studies as a potential form of classroom discourse. Dutro writes that, "Trauma studies offers lenses and metaphors that extend and complement other important constructs and metaphors through which education scholars have revisioned students' lived knowledges and out-of-school literacies with the goal of disrupting what Campano (2007) refers to as the "discourse of deprivation" in schools and classrooms, (Dutro, 2013, p. 11-12). This includes funds of knowledge (Dutro, 2013). Dutro defines trauma studies not as a clinical practice but as a way to find out insights about human functioning (Dutro, 2013). Dutro writes that, "Teachers and students are too often asked to live and teach within myths of schools and classrooms as spaces in which the emotional and personal can be bracketed from the cognitive," (p. 11). This denies the fact that what students bring with them into the school system does have consequences for their academic engagement.

Dutro gives an example of a second grade teacher, Christine, who, following the death of her father, decided to use class time to have her students write personal stories. Christine shared a favorite quotation with her young students that her father always told her and then she modeled writing a bit about him. She was shocked by the students' sensitive responses and following her example, the students were extremely eager to write on their own independent stories (Dutro, 2013). One of her students, Carlton, had been diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Following the personal stories activity, Carlton began opening up to his teacher about his cancer. Later on,

he told Christine that he wanted to tell his classmates about his cancer. He spoke about his experiences orally and through the written word (Dutro, 2013). Following this, Christine decided to plan a unit around Patricia Polacco's picture book, *The Lemonade Club*, which is a text about a young girl's leukemia diagnosis and the support she receives from her teacher and classmates. Christine showcased what would serve as the class' mantra: that life gives both lemons and lemonade. The students were then instructed to write their own narratives about a lemonade experience and a lemon experience (Dutro, 2013). Dutro notes that Carlton had come into second grade as a reluctant writer, but he became engaged when his teacher began the personal narratives unit. In the units that followed, including a poetry unit, Carlton could always be found working diligently and many of his poems addressed his experiences with Hodgkin's lymphoma (Dutro, 2013). Dutro states that by allowing students to write about their personal experiences, both the lemons and the lemonade, teachers verify to their students that all parts of their lives can be used as resources within the school curriculum (Dutro, 2013). Often, the hard times are ones that are left outside of the school walls. For Latino/a students, their journey through the school system in the United States might be one an example of a hard time or a lemon story, since there is the disconnect between home experiences and school experiences. Dutro notes that allowing students the freedom to write about both the positive and the hard moments, this will lead to a more engaging learning experience for children.

It is important to show students that lives are made up of both "lemon" moments and "lemonade" moments. By asking students to write about not solely their positive life experiences, it gives validity to all the factors that make them who they are. It also gives students freedom to write about their funds of knowledge. For Latino/a students, who may not see many similarities between their school culture and their own culture, having the opportunity to write about their

own experiences and interests will be a powerful experience. These practices will help them to find a community within the school walls.

### **Avoiding 'Othering' Impulses in the Classroom**

Dutro also gives an example of a tenth grade student, Diego, and his teacher, Lauren. At the school where Diego attends, which is located in a midsized city, the majority of students are White and middle to upper middle class, but there is a growing and significant population of Latino students. Lauren often felt that there was an us/them dichotomy between the teachers and the Latino students. Lauren made it a point to have a relationship with her students, to allow them to be vulnerable with her. She would ask her students what they needed and wanted from teachers at their school and many simply said they wanted their teachers to talk with them one-on-one (Dutro, 2013). While Diego would always attend Lauren's class, he would often skip his other courses because he felt that his teachers were only paying attention to what Diego terms as the "smart people," (Dutro, 2013, p. 21). Dutro uses Caruth's speaking wound metaphor to challenge the us/them binary and to also challenge what experiences are deemed as "appropriate" to bring into school (Dutro, 2013). Dutro notes that, "If a child's wounds must be hidden upon entering, it seems unrealistic to expect that child to forge deep ties to school," (Dutro, 2013, p. 23). Dutro notes that Caruth's argument points out that allowing a child to bring in all facets of their identity into school cannot be done in conjunction with Othering, or placing students in an us/them dichotomy (Dutro, 2013). Dutro writes that it is crucial to challenge our Othering impulses as educators. The experiences of minorities are used too often as evidence for the distance that there is between educators and their students, but by working to get rid of Othering impulses gives teachers and students a common humanity (Dutro, 2013). This connects back to the cultural styles approach and critical race theory, which attempt to move beyond the

assumption that minority cultures are “lacking.” By moving toward a critical race theory and cultural styles approach, educators will be able to view Latino/a students’ home literacies as assets in the classroom. This will help to bridge the divide between educators and their Latino/a students. For Latino/a students, they may often feel a distance between themselves and their teachers. If educators allow students to bring in their experiences into the classroom, including their “wounds” as Dutro (2013) terms, students will forge those deeper ties to school.

### **Counter-Narratives and Critical Literacy**

In the context section of this research, it was mentioned that Latino/a students are not always given a chance to critique or analyze historical narratives, such as Woodrow Wilson’s invasion of Mexico in 1914, or the media’s portrayal of illegal Mexican immigration. Carmagian (2013) addresses the pedagogical approach of counter-narratives and the use of a critical literacy approach in the classroom. Carmagian writes, “teachers must create classroom learning conditions in which students of color construct counter-narratives of self-determination in the face of corporate media outlets,” (Carmagian, 2013, p. 122). This requires what Carmagian calls, oppositional reading, where students actively analyze how text might privilege one group over another. The focus on Carmagian’s study was to show how ideological literacies help students to hone in on their oppositional reading skills. This helps them examine privilege and oppression but it also helps their academic literacy skills as well, such as their oratory skills and writing (Carmagian, 2013). The study took place at Slauson High school, which is predominantly African American (66%) and Latino/a (33%) (Carmagian, 2013). Carmagian observed classroom activities and instruction, analyzed students’ work and he also conducted interviews with the students. These interviews let students discuss their own classroom experiences (Carmagian, 2013). Students participated in ideological literacy lessons and were asked questions to guide

their work, which was creative, such as a rap or poem. The questions were, “What ideologies are embodied throughout the text? What does the text ask the audience to think, do, or believe? What ideologies are being marginalized and silenced? Which aspects of the text are liberatory/oppressive?” (Carmagian, 2013, p. 124). Through these pedagogical practices, students can see the relationship their own life experiences and their identities in relation to the literacy that is in the popular media (Carmagian, 2013). The use of counter-narratives is especially important for Latino/a students, because it gives them the power to go against historical notions of Latinos in the United States and the negative way in which Latinos are often portrayed in the media.

### **The Use of Testimonios**

Testimonios are a way to take a critical literacy approach. Gutiérrez (2008) addresses how the curriculum should be framed in order to address students' funds of knowledge. Gutiérrez writes, “The curriculum and its pedagogy, then, are grounded in the historical and current particulars of students' everyday lives, while at the same time oriented toward an imagined but possible future,” (p. 152). Gutiérrez notes the importance of educators being aware of the historical context of their students and writes, “A historical view of the educational and sociopolitical reality of migrant and immigrant communities helps to incite a reframing of education, of oneself, and of one's future actions,” (p. 152). Gutiérrez uses the example of a sixteen-year-old migrant student, Ave. Ave wrote an autobiography for a high school program, UCLA Migrant Student Leadership Institute, which addressed her experiences with schooling, immigration, migration and life in the US. She began her text, called “Silent Life” by talking about her past experience in Oaxaca, Mexico. Gutiérrez terms this as the syncretic testimonio, which, “is a hybrid text, a sociopolitical narrative shared orally and witnessed in an intimate and



respectful learning community and, at the same time, written using the traditional conventions of academic texts and the editorial assistance of peers and instructors to develop students' new understandings about themselves and their relations to the immediate and larger social world." (p. 149). A testimonio allows students to, "relocate their experiences in a personal, political, and cultural-historical context," (150). This relates back to critical literacy. Testimonios will give Latino/a students the power to take a critical approach about what they have seen about Latinos in the media or in a historical context. They will then be able to use a testimonio to relate this back to their own lives.

### **Critical Witnessing**

Critical witnessing relates back to what Gutiérrez (2008) terms as the "Third Space," which is where the informal and formal space of school and teacher-student interactions coincide. Dutro (2009a) defines critical witnessing as, "a conceptual tool to facilitate the dually important moves of paying close attention to the everyday testimonies of children while consciously recognizing and resisting deficit narratives..." (Dutro, 2009a, 232). She defines testimony, "as the multiple sources of information about students' lives that circulate in classrooms, including the explicit and overt, as well as the implicit and subtle," (Dutro, 2009a, p. 232). These would be actions such as oral communication and writing during either instruction time or meetings, such as parent-teacher conferences. It also includes observations of children's nonverbal actions and their conversations with adults and their peers. It can also include what the child does or does not have access to (Dutro, 2009a). Dutro goes on to define witness as, "the ways in which information about students is responded to and interpreted by those who surround them in schools (peers, teachers, administrators...any policymakers)," (Dutro, 2009a, p. 232). Dutro

notes that witnessing is crucial because it allows teachers to realize how class or race can affect the way in which a student is talked about in the context of the school walls (Dutro, 2009a).

Dutro (2009a) focuses on a district where the dropout rate was consistently above fifty-percent. Dutro focused on Davis Elementary and two third-grade classrooms. The study was a two-year qualitative one. Davis Elementary is located in the Midwest and one-hundred-percent of the students qualified for free breakfast and lunch. The school's surrounding demographics had a significant Latino, African American and White population. Dutro used field notes, transcripts, classroom discussions, interviews and student work. Dutro used this information from the students, their teacher, Sharon, and other adults in the surrounding community (Dutro, 2009a).

Dutro interviewed a student, Molly, about what kinds of writing she enjoyed. During this conversation, Dutro received insights into Molly's life. Dutro found out that Molly loves to write letters to her dad, who she has only seen twice in her life. Later on in the conversation Dutro found out that Molly has moved so much because she is in foster care. Through this conversation about Molly's favorite things to write about, Dutro received quality information about why Molly's school experiences has been disrupted. Not only this but Dutro got a glimpse into Molly's emotional feelings on her relationship with her father and her fears that the more she moves the less of a chance she will get at a reunion with him (Dutro, 2009a). Critical witness is important, as Dutro notes, because it allows teachers to give validity to students' lived experiences. Children can then use their funds of knowledge as important resources for their academic learning within the walls of school (Dutro, 2009a). In the case of Molly, her frequent moves through foster care and her hope of reconnection with her biological father led to a disrupted school experience for the nine-year-old. In a school district with a 50% dropout rate,

this could have had detrimental effects on her education. Yet, the first step in changing this for the teacher to listen to Molly's experiences and gain insight into her life outside of school (Dutro, 2009a).

Dutro also talks about Jade, who was a student in Sharon's class during the unit on the text, *Leah's Pony*. Jade gave a personal example to Sharon's prompt asking the students to give examples of hard times and talked about how she and her sisters were taken away from their home (Dutro, 2009a). Yet, Jade never showed any warning signs that there were troubles at home. Jade was hardly ever absent and she always had a happy disposition at school, she also stated that she enjoyed school. Yet, through the writing prompt, Dutro and Sharon were able to see that Jade was undergoing challenging circumstances at home. Dutro (2009a) received this information about Jade through a literacy event, which was allowing her to write about her experiences. The same thing occurred with the student Molly, through the pedagogical practice of a writing conference. While Jade did not show warning signs like Molly, such as being absent frequently, the writing prompt did show an insight into Jade's home life (Dutro, 2009a). Dutro writes that, "Molly's and Jade's experiences point to the need for educators to be highly aware of their roles and responsibilities paying close attention to the ways that students are always testifying to their relationship with the social and academic contexts of school," (p. 236). Dutro does make the important note that, "critical witnessing requires awareness of the assumptions educators bring to their interpretations of students' lives," (Dutro, 2009a, p. 236). Sharon, the third grade teacher, was a White teacher who certainly cared about her students. Yet, Dutro writes that Sharon sometimes made assumptions about her students that would put them into the position of "other" in relation to her status as a White, middle-class woman. Dutro gives an example of this when she writes that Sharon made the comment, "the poor White families are

the most needy,” (Dutro, 2009a, p. 236). Dutro says that Sharon worked hard to create close relationships with children’s families and she often praised their accomplishments. Yet, the deficit language appeared when she would talk about students’ challenging circumstances. Dutro goes along to state that, “critical witnessing [also] involves awareness of the influential testimonies that fuel negative assumptions about urban students and families,” (Dutro, 2009a, p. 237). The risk of these negative assumptions is that it creates an us and them dichotomy between teachers and students (Dutro, 2009a). Dutro notes that by using the practice of critical witnessing, teachers can move away from deficit perspectives that sometimes infiltrate the school. Dutro writes that, “...testimonies require critical witnessing, a move that requires a conscious analysis of how one’s positioning may differ from those who provide testimony, particular in terms of class, race...” (Dutro, 2013, p. 25). In classrooms it also involves what Dutro writes as, “a rejection of the us/them dichotomies that position students at arm’s length and recognition of how privilege constructs differences in the stakes of some of the life stories that enter classrooms,” (Dutro, 2013, p. 25). In the case of Sharon, the third-grade teacher, Dutro (2009a) noted that she would sometimes display deficit language which would position students’ as ‘other’ in relation to her position as a white, middle-class female. Dutro says that a tool for teachers should be, “to closely listen to the language we use when discussing students and families in an attempt to recognize assumptions and generalizations and consciously eliminate such language from our repertoire,” (p. 237). Dutro notes that teachers should question the information that they are given, through either the media or news, that might add to their deficit language about their students’ experiences that do not match their own. Dutro writes that, “critical witnessing involves conscious awareness and application of alternate interpretations,” (p. 237). For example, going back to the third-grader, Jade, her home life could have been

interpreted as being stable and supportive, since she was rarely absent and displayed a positive attitude. Yet, through her response to the writing prompt this was found to not be the case, (Dutro, 2009a). It is important for educators to realize that we have our own implicit biases that we have our own implicit biases that we carry with us. Dutro writes that, "...the interpretations we make of others' lives are never singular or straightforward, but are layered with the many experiences and assumptions that we carry with us," (Dutro, 2009, 232).

Dutro (2009a) notes that, "Critical witnessing should involve finding innovative ways for students and families to share their perspectives on, experiences with, and suggestions for public schools," (p. 237). Dutro notes that oftentimes, parents in urban setting are not involved in the decision making that happens surrounding school policies. Dutro notes that this is why it is all the more important to understand students' personal lives. This can be gained through pedagogical practices such as personal narrative writing, letters to the editor, multimedia projects shared with the community as an audience, performance poetry or civics lessons (Dutro, 2009a). Dutro writes that, "When students are the creators and active subjects of the texts through which others access information about urban students' experiences, they not only raise issues and implications that could only be drawn from their perspectives, but they also interrupt the ways their audiences can construct version of urban youth," (p. 237). This allows for students to provide their testimony in the school setting. This is especially important for Latino/a youth because their testimonies are ones that are not often heard within the school setting. Giving validity to Latino/a students' lived experiences will show them that their literacy experiences are significant within the classroom.

Critical witnessing is something that can be used as an ongoing practice in the classrooms of current and preservice elementary teachers. The term 'ongoing' is used because the main goal

of critical witnessing is *listen* to students. This could be listening to children's conversations with their peers in the lunchroom or at recess. It could include observing what materials the child brings with them, or doesn't bring with them, into school; a lunch, pencils, keychains on book bags. Another crucial aspect of critical witnessing requires knowledge of the child's family. Home visits could be an especially beneficial practice used for educators, since they will gain first-hand experience of their students' home literacies. Levine (2008) addresses home visits. Levine notes that by conducting home visits, trust is instilled in the families. This makes the school a more open place for families, especially for families who for the reason of differences in language, might feel discouraged or hesitant about participating in school events. If for some reason home visits are not allowed by certain school districts, educators can utilize other practices that help them gain insight into the outside lives of their students. This would include establishing regular communication with parents, which could be through emails, phone calls or newsletters. Teachers could also make sure to keep a record of observations of children outside of their academic assessments and use this during parent-teacher conferences.

### **Alternate Course Options**

Acosta (2007) talks about his high school class, Chicano/Raza Studies, and how the literature that he uses for his students reflects their lives, families and histories. Acosta writes that this leads to an affirmation of the students' identity in the academic sense. The class took place at Tucson High Magnet School, which is located in an area that has a rich history of Chicano traditions and the school is 60% Chicano/a or Latino/a (Acosta, 2007). In the fall of 2003, Chicano Studies/Literature was offered for students as a possible humanities course option. The themes in the course focus on the Chicano/a experience in America. Acosta notes that, "it is important to choose literature that reflects their lives, their families, and their history," (Acosta,

2007, p. 38). The writing assignments also involve self-reflection. Acosta notes that students often felt a connection to the characters in the literature that they were reading. The students also note how they felt marginalized by contemporary popular literature and the assignment that followed was for the students to write a personal narrative that examined the metaphor of borders that they felt were present in their lives (Acosta, 2007). Another assignment includes looking at texts that focus on the history of resistance in the Chicano/a community. The class also examines counter-narratives, such as speeches from diverse groups. Then, the students write an analysis of their favorite speech and are allowed to present these if they so desire. At the end of the year, the students create poetry and participate in a poetry-slam on the topic of the Harlem Renaissance and the Xicano/a movimiento (Acosta, 2007, p. 39). From the assignments that the students complete, they find that, "school no longer exists outside of their experiences, and an academic identity emerges," (Acosta, 2007, 38). Latino/a students are no able to find themselves within the walls of the school and there is no longer a disconnect between their identities as students and their identities as human-beings.

### **Creating Positive Multilingual Environments**

Lucas (1990) collected data from five school sites in California and one in Arizona in order to find what helps the success of Latino/a students. For each of these schools, the minority population was white and for all but one school, the Latino population had the largest demographic. Information was obtained from interviews with Latino/a students and also information was obtained from school faculty and staff. There were roughly twenty-four Latino students interviewed at each school. Sixty-one percent of these students were born in Mexico. Some students were defined as "newcomers," who came to the United States between fourteen and eighteen. Others had either been born in the US or had immigrated in elementary or middle

school. 72.5 percent spoke Spanish at home, 98% of the students' fathers worked in labor or service-related jobs and 90% of the students' mothers worked as housewives or in service-related jobs (Lucas, 1990). While the Latino students were mainly from working-class backgrounds, they had different experiences culture-wise, since there was a variation of when they came to the United States. Lucas found that, "there is no such thing as a 'typical' Latino student, and that a school successful with this population would have to be sensitive to differences in students' experiences and backgrounds," (p. 321). From the interviews, eight key features were found to help the success of Latino students. These were the validation of the students' culture and language, making high expectations for the students and making these expectations well-known, making the education of these students a top priority in the individual schools, conducting staff development that is designed to help teachers serve these students more effectively, having a variety of courses and programs for Latino/a students, having a counseling program that gives attention to Latino/a students, encouraging Latino/a parents to become involved in their students' education, and having school staff all share a commitment to empowering these students (Lucas, 1990). Ways in which to go about validating students' cultures is to learn about them, hire staff with similar backgrounds, allowing students to speak their home language and creating extracurricular activities that are geared towards minority students. High expectations can be instilled by again, hiring staff with similar cultural backgrounds who will act as role models, providing college information programs for these students and college counseling, bringing in representatives from colleges, and encouraging parents to support their children entering to college, offering advanced bilingual classes, encouraging teachers to serve as guidance counselors for their students and not just academic educator, and also recognizing students' hard work and effort. The way in which schools can prioritize the education of language-minority



students includes holding high expectations for these students, as stated before. It also includes designing various lesson plans that provide different approaches to teaching minority students, advocating for students, having bilingual staff and/or teachers who are trained in practices for minority students. Staff development can be designed in a way that provides instructional techniques for educators, provides information to the staff on the cultural backgrounds and languages of the students and addresses communication with minority students. If staff are given incentives such as compensation, they will be more likely to participate in this specific professional development program. In terms of types of courses and programs, this could include offering courses in the students' primary language, keeping the class sizes around 20-25 students to have maximum interaction, providing academic support for students and also insuring that the classes do not keep the students from advancing to upper level courses. A counseling program could be offered that utilizes counselors that know the students' primary language, that have knowledge about college opportunities and value their academic success. Parents play a large role in their children's school experience. Schools can help strengthen parent participation by having staff who know the parents' language, having ESL classes for parents at night, having monthly parent nights, early morning meetings and neighborhood meetings with staff, making sure that the parents are involved with the counselors about their children's course schedules, and also having contact information to keep in touch with parents about information. Finally, school staff should be committed to empowering their minority students. There should be extra time given to work with minority students, trainings for educating minority students should be more effective, there could be sponsored extra-curricular activities for minority students, teachers should be encouraged to serve as advocates in the political scene for their students, through community service events or activities (Lucas, 1990). All of these findings showcase

how schools can go about prioritizing Latino/a education. Considering the changing demographics of the United States, schools should be attempting to implement these key findings in order to better serve Latino/a students.

### **The Fluidity of Culture**

Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) give suggestions for how educators can move towards a practice that does acknowledge that cultural is not a static, but fluid, concept. They give four different practices which include. This first point is to avoid making general statements based on research. Educators should think in not the past, but the present tense. Gutiérrez and Rogoff write, “using the past tense marks the findings as statements of what was observed rather than...what is a situated observation,” (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 5). Single observations should not become sweeping generalizations. The second point is to ground observations about culture in the historical but also dynamic processes that appear in various cultural communities. Labels about a participant, such as Latino/a, immigrant etc. should be used to describe a person’s background, not separate people into distinct categories (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003). The third point is to take note of how a community’s practices change. This requires observers to look at a community what Gutiérrez and Rogoff term, “a constellation of factors,” (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 5). There are many aspects that make up a community and the processes are constantly evolving. The final point is to avoid overgeneralization. This ties in with the first point in that, one observation should not ground the research. Gutiérrez and Rogoff state that research about minority communities should be done, “across multiple settings and communities,” (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 5). This will better help to identify the best course of action to take in regards to classroom pedagogy for these students (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003). As stated in the literature review, fluid pedagogy is especially important for young people, since what it means to

be Latino/a is continually shifting (Paris, 2014). This will give power to Latino/a youth experiences, since teachers will be validating the flexibility of culture.

### **Teachers as Ethnographers**

All of this requires teachers to take on the role of an ethnographer, as Moll (1992) writes. An important aspect of funds of knowledge is, “the ethnographic analysis of household dynamics,” (Moll, 1992, p. 132). This could involve educators researching the sociopolitical and economic context of the household, the social history, and the labor history. Along with this, it requires teachers to also study how the members of the family deal with change, and other difficult situations, such as social and economic ones. This will give an look into how the household thrives (Moll, 1992). The school is one aspect of a child’s life. If an educator steps into the role of ethnographer, they will take into account all the aspects that make up a child. Moll writes educators will have knowledge of, “...the multiple spheres of activity within which the child is enmeshed,” (Moll, 1992, p. 133). They will see the child for their entire being. As Moll writes, “the teacher...will know the child as a “whole” person, not merely as a “student,” (Moll, 1992, p. 133). Dutro (2009a) writes that,

attending to the way of children’s experiences is crucial-even, perhaps, the most important endeavor in the world. Indeed, learning about children, and their experiences in urban schools, requires a vigilant eye and attuned ear for the small, everyday revelations that provide insights into their experiences and points of view, their struggles, sorrows, joys and triumphs (231-232).

It is important to create a space for students to share their own views and ideas. Dutro notes that it is children’s voices and perspectives that is the foundation for the functioning of schools.

Iddings (2013) notes that in a study of second-generation students, it was found that the most

successful students had the teachers who called on their students' household funds of knowledge (Iddings, 2013). Iddings notes that, "...There is the real possibility of rupturing or fracturing students' connection to their families and to their lived experiences and funds of knowledge, potentially important resources for learning," (p. 504). Not only do educators have the responsibility to create meaningful learning experiences for their students, but they also have the responsibility to validate the experiences of all children. This includes Latino/a students, whose lived experiences may not make up the majority in the classroom or might not fit with the lived experiences of their teachers.

### **Discussion**

This section will focus on the implications for current educators and preservice educators and specific, feasible ways to incorporate students' funds of knowledge within the classroom. It will showcase the importance of viewing children not just as students but as people, first and foremost.

#### **Students as Holistic Individuals**

Dutro (2009a) cites the Alice Walker quotation, "The most important question in the world is, 'Why is the child crying?'" (p. 231). Children do not enter into classrooms as blank slates, they come into school with various forms of literacy, cultural experiences and viewpoints. Just as Walker writes, it is the job of educators to *listen* to children and understand them not just in their role as "student" but as a holistic individual. Children occupy many roles in their lives and their role of student is just one of these. Thus, a main goal is to intertwine the classroom with students' home lives, and not keep the two as separate spheres. Life does not stop once students enter into the classroom and educators should strive to critically witness, as Walker speaks to in her above quotation, when it comes to working with our students.

In Malaguzzi's poem, "The Child is Made of One Hundred," (n.d.), he writes on the multiple facets that make up a child's life and how the school often ignores the vast majority of these. Along with this, Malaguzzi makes the point that school and the child's own culture are often separate. Malaguzzi uses the metaphor of a child having one hundred forms of various entities; one hundred forms of languages, thoughts, ways of speaking playing and thinking. Yet, Malaguzzi points out that the school 'steals' 99 of these and writes, "And thus they tell the child that the hundred is not there. The child says: No way. The hundred is there," (Malaguzzi, n.d.). When Latino/a students come into the classroom and do not see 99% of their home culture, then 99% of meaningful learning is lost. This is what happened with my student Rosa, who could not find the space to discuss her own experiences, such as her trips to visit her extended family in Mexico, or her close sense of familialism. Once she received the space to write, talk and have an educator simply listen to her lived moments she grew to love learning and therefore, found her own identity within the walls of the school.

When educators decide to implement these types of pedagogical practices, they take on the role of informing other colleagues about these academic opportunities. This requires educators to serve as advocates for students. Educators who are committed to culturally responsive pedagogy could offer to lead a professional development session on the importance of funds of knowledge in the classroom. This could take place during a faculty meeting following approval of the administration. Moll (1992) wrote about a group of teachers participating in a series of training workshops on how to go about conducting qualitative methods of study. Something similar could be reproduced during professional development session.

When entering into the teaching profession, educators are not just coming into the classroom to serve as the giver of academic knowledge, we also serve as caregivers, mentors,

guardians, and advocates. In her poem, Hughes writes on the many different children who will need our love, whether these be children who are privileged, “We pray for children...who get visits from the tooth fairy,” (Hughes, 1995), and we care for those who are not so privileged, “We pray for children whose nightmares come in the daytime,” (Hughes, 1995). She concludes with, “We pray for children who want to be carried and for those who must, for those we never give up on and for those who don’t get a second chance. For those we smother...and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it,” (Hughes, 1995). Part of serving as an advocate for students means giving validity to students’ funds of knowledge. School is one part of a child’s life and children all have stories that make up who they are as individuals. Why this research focused on Latino/a is that for many children in the majority, white students, school reflects their own lived experiences. For many minority children, this is not the case. If educators are to serve as advocates, it should be to serve as advocates for not just the students who are in the majority, but also, and maybe even more so, for children who make up the minority. For these students, their lives should not be dropped off at the school entrance. School is a part of life, not a separate entity. Teachers should encourage their students to carry their funds of knowledge through the classroom door, to not separate school from life.

### **Implications for Educators**

Culturally responsive pedagogical practices leads to meaningful learning experiences for students who normally do not see most of their funds of knowledge within the classroom. A practice that was not addressed in the results section centers around poetry. If educators are teaching a poetry unit a culturally responsive pedagogical practice would be to incorporate “Where I’m From” poems, which are inspired by the writer and educator, George Ella Lyon. In these poems, children write about their lives. This does not just include the actual place where

they grew up. It includes all aspects of a child's life. Lyon begins her own *Where I'm From* poem by writing,

I am from clothespins, from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride. I am from the dirt under the back porch (Black, glistening, it tasted like beets.) I am from the forsythia bush the Dutch elm whose long-gone limbs I remember as if they were my own (Lyon, 1999)

Not only will students will learn poetry devices, such as descriptive language, line and stanza creation, and word choice but they will also get chance to speak about their own culture, families and experiences.

It is important to note the requirements that educators have, especially in regards to state standards and the common core. Some educators may question the feasibility of implementing these pedagogical practices, whether it be time constraints or requirements imposed at the school, district or state level. These practices will require educators to fit the standards to the culturally relevant pedagogy that was suggested. Many of these pedagogy suggested will align with the Language Arts standards. This section will specifically be looking at elementary level standards when giving examples of how this pedagogy could fit into the common core. For example, in fourth grade, one of the standards for writing states, "Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequence," (*Common Core*). It goes onto to include the students should be able to establish a situation, introduce the narrator and the characters, organize the events in a sequence that makes sense, use dialogue and descriptive language to show not tell, use transitional words and phrases, use sensory details, and provide a conclusion," (*Common Core*). This would allow teachers to use the practice of personal narratives in their classrooms. Writing narratives is not just included as a standard for fourth grade, but it also appears in the standards for grades five, three, two, one

and even kindergarten, where students are expected to produce narratives through drawings. Therefore, using a narrative writing prompt, such as asking students to write about their 'lemon' experiences and 'lemonade' experiences, could fit with the standards of any grade level. Students can still learn writing practices, such as how to plan out a story and what goes into a piece of writing through a personal piece. Yet, by allowing the students to write a piece about their own lived experiences, they will be able to naturally connect to their work. This will lead to a more meaningful learning experience in terms of learning how to 'be a writer.' Part of the standards for elementary students also include distributing their writing. According to the standards, students in elementary grades should be able to plan, revise and edit their pieces. Another standard requires using technology to distribute their pieces. Planning, revising, editing and publishing can all take place in the form of personal narrative writing pieces. Dutro (2009a) also addresses read-alouds that incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy. This could be a dialogic read-aloud or it could be a read-aloud that transitions into a writing prompt afterwards, such as 'Lemon and Lemonade' stories. These read-alouds would also fit into the Common Core Standards for elementary language arts. One of the standards in third grade, for example, requires students to, "Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters," (*Common Core*). This standard makes it explicit that students should be incorporating their own thoughts into their interpretation of the text. It is also possible to fit read-alouds, certainly dialogic read-alouds, to the standards while *also* incorporating funds of knowledge. Certain standards ask students to retell the message or lesson of a story (grade two), describe the characters in a story (grade three), and quote evidence from a text when making inferences (grade five). Each of these standards could be included within a dialogic read-aloud with a funds of knowledge goal in mind. Interspersed with the questions that ask students to talk



about characterization or main idea, teachers can also be sure to ask questions such as, “Have you ever felt the way the character in the text felt?” “What was an example of when you felt that way?” Teachers could ask the students if an event that the character is going through reminds them of an event that they experienced, or if the character is very different from themselves, ask them why that is. This requires students to practice their compare and contrast skills with literary texts and the characters within those texts. Yet, the experience is more meaningful since one of the ‘characters’ that they are comparing and contrasting with is themselves. After all, children have the deepest understanding when it comes to their own lived experiences.

### **Implications for Pre-Service Teachers**

Schools of Education for pre-service teachers should emphasize the importance for educators to involve families in their future teaching practice. Pre-service teachers should have access to resources that they can use to establish relationships with their students’ families. Home visits, which is a practice addressed in Levine’s 2008 article, are a beneficial tool for developing relationships with families, and pre-service teachers should be made aware of this option. Home visits would allow teachers to go into the family’s personal space, where the teacher is no longer the figure in power, and it would give a vivid glimpse into the child’s home literacy. If for some reason home visits are not allowed by certain school districts, educators can utilize other practices that help them gain insight into the outside lives of their students. This would include establishing regular communication with parents, which could be through emails, phone calls or newsletters. Teachers could also make sure to keep a record of observations of children outside of their academic assessments and use this during parent-teacher conferences. By giving pre-service teachers a knowledge of the importance of funds of knowledge, these pre-service teachers can then serve as advocates in their future school setting. They can advocate for

faculty meetings or professional developments that focus on incorporating home literacy into the classroom and resources to use. These pre-service teachers can bring their knowledge on funds of knowledge to the administration, in order to advocate for a culturally relevant pedagogy approach.

### **Limitations**

Latino/a education remains an understudied topic, and therefore, the availability of resources was a limitation. Moll (1992) was the introductory article to the term 'funds of knowledge.' Therefore, the term has only been in use in the past twenty-six years. In the beginning, this study was going to focus on Latino/a English Language Learners and the pedagogical practices that would support language acquisition. There were multiple articles from the UNC Library that addressed this topic of study. Yet, when switching the topic of study to focus on looking at funds of knowledge for Latino populations specifically, the resources became more difficult to locate. An expert in the field was a beneficial resource in finding articles that addressed Latinos in schools, funds of knowledge and culturally relevant pedagogy. While there were not many articles on funds of knowledge for Latino/a students, specifically, there is a plethora of articles on culturally relevant pedagogy. Not all the articles available were used in conducting this research. Implicit bias is another limitation of this study. This research was approached with a lens that was oriented towards culturally responsive and sustaining approaches. Assimilative approaches to Latino education were excluded because of the bias in which this work was conducted with. The feasibility of the pedagogical practices is a third limitation. Educators may be willing to implement the practices discussed in the results section but for district or state requirements, educators may feel that they do not have the time, support or approval to implement this pedagogy. Along with this, since the study is focused on Latino/a

students, educators might not see this as being significant if they do not have that a large percentage of Latino/a children in their classrooms. Yet, it should be noted that funds of knowledge incorporation is something that all classrooms need, considering the rapidly changing demographic of the United States.

### **Implications for Future Research**

If this study were to be conducted in the future, research could be conducted with participants who identify as Latino/a. Research could be conducted in the form of qualitative research, which was a practice suggested by Moll (1992). This would require researchers to take on the role of ethnographer. These qualitative studies could include personal interviews, home visits, case studies, and family histories. It could also include observations of students not just in the home setting but in the classroom setting as well.

Along with this, information from this study could be utilized for another minority group. This study specifically looked at Latino/a students, since they are the fastest growing minority group, yet, the graduation rates have stayed stagnant. This research though, would benefit all minority students, and in fact it would benefit all students within the classroom.

This study also specifically addressed elementary aged students. In the future, pedagogy could be researched that is suited more towards middle and high school aged students. Pedagogical practices for elementary students will look different than practices that could be utilized for older students.

### **Conclusion**

Findings from this study showcase the importance of implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy within the classroom. Based on the contextual information, socio-politically and

academically, provided on Latinos in the United States, specifically North Carolina, this type of pedagogy is especially important for Latino/a students.

This study addressed the significance of educators taking on the role of an ethnographer within their classroom. By using qualitative methods, such as learning about the family histories of students and their families, educators will be able to implement pedagogical practices that fit toward the needs of the students within their specific classroom. This study has implications for current and future educators in that educators will be able to understand the importance of being an ethnographer and of critical witnessing. As Malaguzzi (n.d.) writes, the child has one-hundred languages, or one-hundred literacies. Educators and schools should strive to not steal ninety-nine of these, but allow the child the freedom to bring all of their literacies into the classroom. Thus, validating the child's funds of knowledge. After all, the hundred is there.

### References

- Acosta, C. (2007). Developing Critical Consciousness: Resistance Literature in a Chicano Literature Class. *The English Journal*, 97(2), 36-42.
- Behar, R. (1994). *Dare We Say 'I'? Bringing the personal into scholarship*. The Chronicle of Higher Education.
- Carmagian, P. (2013). Seeing Through Lies: Teaching Ideological Literacy as a Corrective Lens. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 46(1), 119-134. DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2013.750185
- Castañeda, O. (2006). The Chicano Movement in Washington State 1967-2006. Retrieved from [http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/Chicanomovement\\_part1.htm](http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/Chicanomovement_part1.htm)
- Common Core State Standards Initiative: Preparing America's Students for College and Career*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/4/>
- Duncan-Andrade, J.M.R. (2005). An Examination of the Sociopolitical History of Chicanos and its Relationship to School Performance. *Urban Education*, 40(6). 576-605. DOI: 10.1177/0042085905281391
- Dutro, E. (2009). Children's Testimony and the Necessity of Critical Classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 48(3), 231-238. DOI: 10.1080/00405840902997519
- Dutro, E. (2009). Children Writing "Hard Times": Lived Experiences of Poverty and the Class-Privileged Assumptions of a Mandated Curriculum. *Language Arts*. 87(2). 89-98.
- Dutro, E. (2013). Listening to the Speaking Wound: A Trauma Studies Perspective on Student Positioning in Schools. *American Educational Research Journal*. 51(1). 7-35. DOI: 10.3102/0002831213503181
- Dworin, J.E. (2006). The Family Stories Project: Using Funds of Knowledge for Writing

- International Reading Association*, 59(6). 510-520. DOI: 10.1598/RT.59.6.1
- Gandara, P. (2010). The Latino Education Crisis. *Educational Leadership*, 67(5), 24-30.
- Gutiérrez, K.D. (2008). Developing a Sociocritical Literacy in the Third Space. *International Reading Association*, 43(2). 148-164. DOI: 10.1598/RRQ.43.2.3
- Gutiérrez, K.D. (2009). Re-mediating Literacy: Culture, Difference, and Learning for Students From Nondominant Cultures. *American Educational Research Association*, 33, 212-245. DOI: 10.3102/0091732X08328267
- Gutiérrez, K.D. & Rogoff, B. (2003). Cultural Ways of Learning: Individual Traits or Repertoires of Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 32(5), 19-25. DOI: 10.3102/0013189X032005019
- Hughes, Ina J. "We Pray for Children." *Children's Defense Fund*. William Morrow. 1995.
- Iddings, A.C.D., & Combs, M.C., & Moll, L. (2012). In the Arid Zone: Drying Out Educational Resources for English Language Learners Through Policy and Practice. *Urban Education*, 47(2), 495-514. DOI: 10.1177/0042085911430713
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(2), 465-491. DOI: 10.3102/00028312032003465
- Latino Immigration. (2003). Retrieved from: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-recent/6182>
- Levine, T. H., Irizarry, J. G., & Bunch, G. C. (2008). Beyond Open Houses. *Journal of Staff Development*, 29(1), 29-33.
- Loris, Malaguzzi. "The Child is Made of One Hundred." *The Innovative Teacher Project*. (n.d.)
- Lucas, T. & Henze, R. & Donato, R. (1990). Promoting the Success of Latino Language-

- Minority Students: An Exploratory Study of Six High Schools. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(3), 315-340. DOI: 10.17763/haer.60.3.0160105tt9kgkq51
- Luke, A. (1995). When Basics Aren't Enough. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 95-115.
- Lyon, George Ella (1999). Where I'm From. *Smithsonian Education*. Retrieved on 04 October 2016 from [http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/professional\\_development/workshops/writing/george\\_ella\\_lyon.pdf](http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/professional_development/workshops/writing/george_ella_lyon.pdf)
- McGinnis, E.I. (Producer), & Palos, A.L. (Director). (2011). Precious Knowledge [Documentary]. United States: Dos Vatos Productions.
- Moll, L. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141. DOI: 10.1080/00405849209543534
- North Carolina Latinos (2003). Retrieved from <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-recent/6182>
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3) 93-97. DOI: 10.3102/0013189X12441244
- Paris, D. (2010). Texting Identities: Lessons for Classrooms from Multiethnic Youth Space. 2010. *National Council of Teachers of English*, 278-292.
- Paris, D. (2014). What Are We Seeking to Sustain Through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy? A Loving Critique Forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85-101. DOI: 10.17763/haer.84.1.982l873k2ht16m77
- Patten, E. The Nation's Latino Population is Defined by Its Youth (2016).

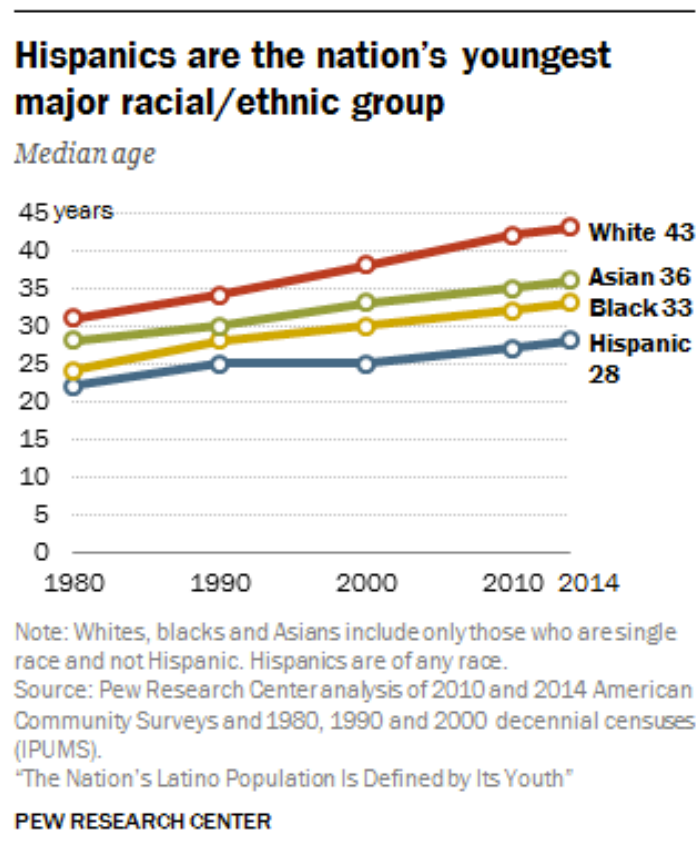
Retrieved from: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/04/20/the-nations-latino-population-is-defined-by-its-youth/>

Rogoff, B. (2003). The Cultural Nature of Human Development. *Oxford University Press*, 36-62.

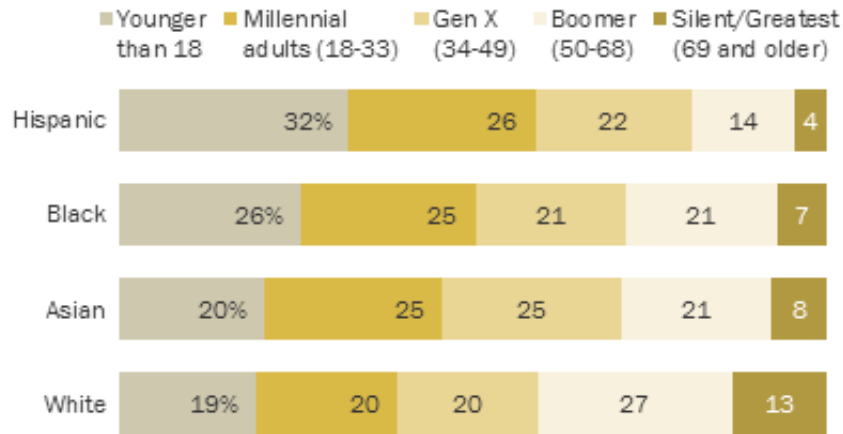


## Appendix

Figure 1



This chart gives the median age for each racial group in the United States, with White at 43, Asian at 36, Black at 33, and Hispanic at 28 (Patten, 2016).

**Figure 2****Nearly six-in-ten Hispanics are Millennials or younger**

Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only those who are single race and not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

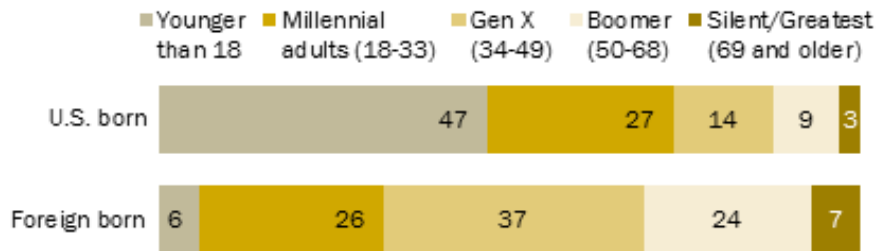
"The Nation's Latino Population Is Defined by Its Youth"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

This chart gives the distribution of the four demographics in each in five age ranges. These age ranges include the silent generation (69+), the baby boomer generation (50-68), generation X (34-49), Millennials (18-33), and younger than 18. The majority of Hispanics are under 18 years of age, at 32% of the population (Patten, 2016).

**Figure 3**

---

**Nearly three-quarters of U.S.-born Hispanics are Millennials or younger***% among Hispanics*

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014 American Community Survey (IPUMS).  
"The Nation's Latino Population Is Defined by Its Youth"

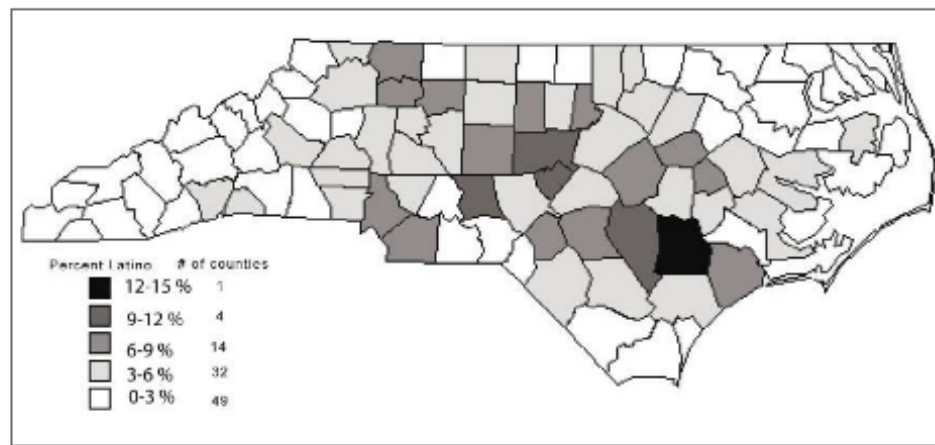
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---

This chart addresses U.S.-born Hispanics specifically and gives statistics for each of the five generations. For the younger than 18 generation, the U.S.-born Hispanic demographic is at 47% (Patten, 2016).

**Figure 4**

**MAP 2:1: NORTH CAROLINA LATINOS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION, 2000**

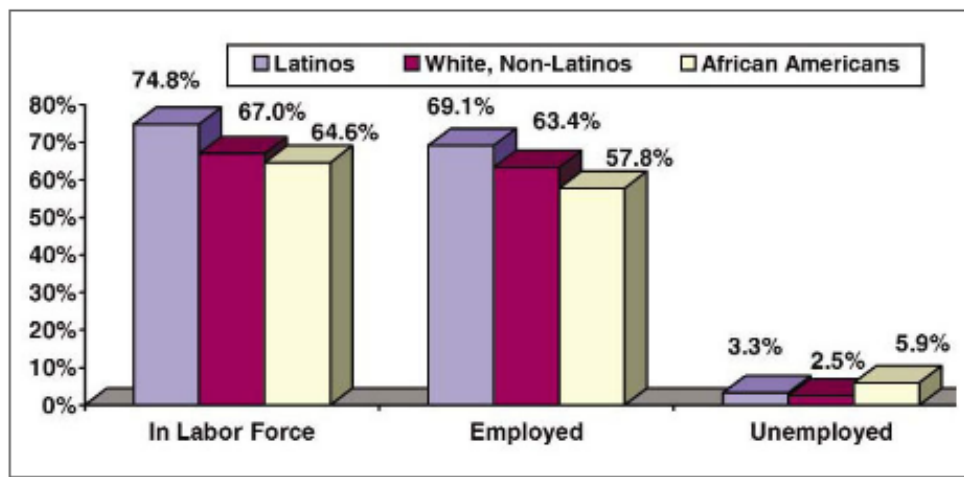


Source: US Census, 2000. Produced by the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, UNC-CH.

This figure gives the percentages of Latinos in each county in NC. The majority of the Latino population resides in central North Carolina (NC Latino Health, 2003).

**Figure 5**

**CHART 2:1: EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OLDER (2000)**

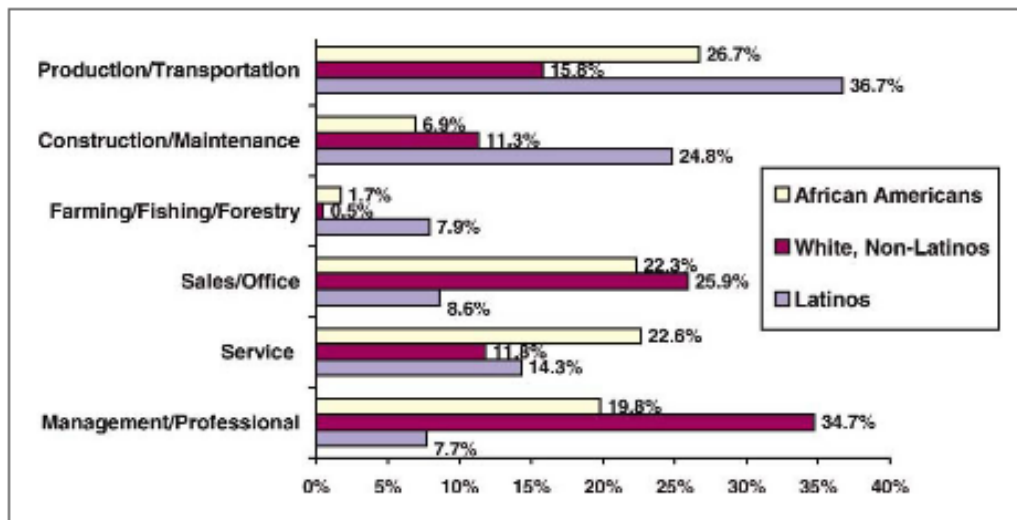


Source: US Census. Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Summary Tables (PCT048)

This chart gives the employment status of those 16 and older in NC. The largest demographic that is in the labor force, out of Latinos, Whites, and African Americans, is Latinos at 74.8%. The largest demographic that is employed, again out of Latinos, Whites, and African Americans, is Latinos at 69.1% (NC Latino Health, 2003).

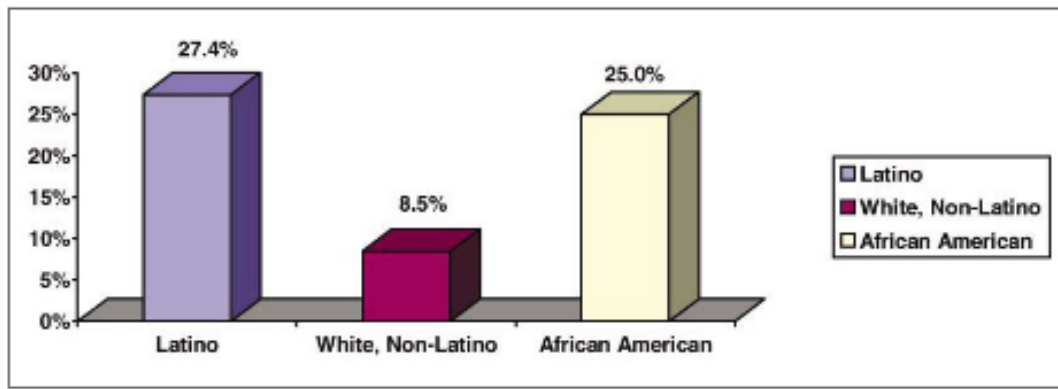
**Figure 6**

**CHART 2:2: OCCUPATION FOR THE EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OLDER (2000)**



Source: US Census. Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Summary Tables (PCT049)

This chart gives an overview of the occupations for those employed in North Carolina. It is distributed by race, African American, Whites, and Latinos. The Latino demographic has larger demographics than White and African American in the areas of production/transportation, construction/maintenance, and farming/fishing/forestry (NC Latino Health, 2003).

**Figure 7****CHART 2:3: PERCENTAGE OF NORTH CAROLINA POPULATION THAT LIVES IN POVERTY (2000)**

Source: US Census. Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Summary Tables. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Age (P114, P115)

This chart shows the percentage of the North Carolina population that lives in poverty, using the three demographics of Latino, White, and African American. White has the lowest population living in poverty, at 8.5% and the Latino population has the highest percentage at 27.4% (NC Latino Health, 2003).